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Africa Review



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20 September 1985

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Articles have been coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Comments and queries regarding this publication may be directed to the Chief, Production Staff, Office of African and Latin American Analysis,

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Articles

Ethiopia: Pause in the Resettlement Program

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The Mengistu government recently suspended the resettlement of peasants from Ethiopia's war-torn and drought-stricken north, but the US Embassy reports that the suspension probably is temporary. We believe that Addis Ababa remains steadfast in its conviction that only resettlement will break peasant resistance in the north and end the cycle of drought and famine that has plagued northern Ethiopia. Western donors expressed concern over the coercive tactics used in resettlement and human rights abuses in camps in the south. In our judgment, logistic and infrastructure problems—and possibly Western donor accusations of human rights abuses—have influenced the government to delay its resettlement timetable. Addis Ababa, however, probably calculates that, if faced with a fait accompli, Western donors will be forced to provide at least humanitarian assistance to the residents of the camps.

Regime Goals

The resettlement program, which was begun in October 1984, has both economic and political motivations. Moving the peasants is seen by Addis Ababa as a solution to the problem of endemic drought and famine in northern Ethiopia, an area burdened with overpopulation and infertile farmland. We believe, however, that the primary factor is the regime's desire to undermine northern resistance to central rule and collectivized farming. Collectivization, in the eyes of Addis Ababa, is intended to increase agricultural productivity while extending political and economic control over the peasants. The US Embassy reports that, apart from small family plots, all resettled peasants are being placed on collectivized farms.

The movement of peasants from the northern province of Tigray to the lightly populated and richer areas of the south and southwest may undercut the base of

support for insurgents, who depend on local peasants for food, and logistic support. A recent US Embassy report, however, indicates that of the total of 500,000 peasants resettled since October 1984, more than 400,000 were from Welo and Shewa Provinces and that fewer than 100,000 have come from Tigray. Therefore, while the movement of peasants from the Tigray Province may disrupt insurgency supply lines, we do not believe it will cripple the insurgents. Moreover, the high rate of population growth in the north and the gradual return of Tigrean refugees from Sudan will buttress the already existing local support for the insurgency, in our judgment.

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Current Status

Western observers agree that the resettlement program has been hastily planned and implemented. US Embassy sources have reported cases of involuntary uprooting and forced separation of families, noting that the government has given the ruling Workers Party of Ethiopia, the implementing arm of the program in the field, quotas for resettling the peasants. Until recently, the regime had pledged to resettle 1.2 million peasants by the end of the year, but the logistic difficulties, government-rebel clashes, and delays in the development of roads and housing have reportedly forced the government to put the resettlement program on hold. In addition, Western donors' charges of human rights abuses may have influenced the regime's decision. The US Embassy reports the government has delayed its deadline for resettling the 1.2 million people to the end of next year.

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The government's effort to develop infrastructure for the camps includes sending work groups, comprised of university faculty and students, to the resettlement

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areas. Some 22,000 workers were ordered to isolated sites in the south and southwest in June to build dwellings in preparation for the influx of settlers from the north. Reports from US Embassy sources touring these areas indicate the campaign has been a total failure. Heavy rains, lack of roads, and low morale led to the breakdown. [redacted]

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[redacted] noted the inappropriateness of settling peasants in an area incompatible with their agrarian experience, and on land where apart from rice—a grain foreign to the Ethiopian diet—the range of potential crops is limited. [redacted]

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[redacted] reported abysmal living conditions, inhabitants in poor physical health, and virtually nonexistent services. [redacted] reported less austere conditions. [redacted]

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Prospects

Despite the ability of the regime to resettle 500,000 peasants to date, we believe that the obstacles to successful functioning of the resettlement camps are formidable. Inadequate medical care, food, and farm equipment will severely impede efforts to establish even subsistence-level productivity. The low morale of resettled peasants and lackluster support by students and faculty are serious roadblocks. Nevertheless, in our estimation, the Mengistu regime is wedded to resettlement for political reasons and is unlikely to do more than slow it down. [redacted]

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Although concern in the donor community about resettlement is widespread, we believe, if the regime continues to move peasants south, Western donors may contribute at least humanitarian assistance. The Catholic Church has already offered medical assistance, and there are indications that Australia and West Germany will provide aid. In fact, the US Embassy believes that, apart from the British, the United States may be alone in its strong opposition to resettlement. [redacted]

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Cameroon: Pressures on Biya []

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Despite Cameroon's strong economic performance and relative political calm, bureaucratic corruption and mismanagement, junior officer grumbling, and chronic tribal rivalries are placing strains on President Biya's three-year-old regime. A coup attempt in April 1984 by elements of the elite, Presidential Guard, and [] some 15 military officers were arrested in July for coup plotting, are the most telling examples of mounting frustrations. Although we believe that external opposition groups—based primarily in Paris—lack the financial strength and size to challenge Biya's grip, the Embassy reports that Biya fears that former President Ahidjo, who now resides in southern France, and his supporters in the current government may try to move against him.

Tribal Frictions

Ethnic suspicions permeate the government and military [] Anglophones—who form some 10 percent of the 9.7 million population—fear their gradual assimilation into the dominant francophone community. The English-speaking leaders criticized Biya in recent months for ignoring their interests, alleging poor educational opportunities at the secondary level, a discriminatory policy regarding bilingualism at the universities, and underrepresentation in government, according to US Embassy reporting. Dissatisfaction also has grown this year among the Bamileke, Cameroon's largest tribe, which dominates the agricultural and commercial sectors. [] the Bamileke—who inhabit the western highlands—charged earlier this year that Biya favors his fellow tribesmen, and a recent government crackdown on corruption is designed to undercut their influential economic role, according to Embassy reports. The Embassy also notes Biya has sought to allay their concerns by appointing a prominent Bamileke businessman to his inner circle of advisers. []

Ethnic tensions persist in the military as well. The US Embassy reports the officers corps is southern dominated, while the ranks of the Army are almost 40 percent northern. Earlier this year, Bamileke complained that military assignments and promotions favor Beti officers and enlisted men. [] tribal friction may gradually undermine command capabilities. []

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Military Frustration

Evidence suggests that unhappiness with Biya's rule may be building in the 10,000-man military.

[] some 15 officers and NCOs were arrested in July for coup plotting. Moreover, junior officers have been carefully monitoring Biya's efforts to make good his promises to end corruption among senior officers, the US Embassy reports. []

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last February a group of lieutenants and captains met with Biya to express their unhappiness and complain that senior officers receive too many privileges. According to the Embassy, Biya is seeking to ease their dissatisfaction by furnishing them with inexpensive cars. []

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Economic Concerns

Although Cameroon has averaged real growth rates of about 6 percent in 1984 and 1985, the country faces economic challenges that may hamper reform and slow growth. According to US Embassy reporting, some of the 100 US firms in the country are in conflict with the government over tax rates, and should Yaounde seek greater returns, American investors probably will look elsewhere. The Embassy also notes Cameroon has a \$12 million loan outstanding to Chase Bank, and that Yaounde is not making payment deadlines. Moreover, Western observers are mixed in their views of Cameroon's ability to develop alternate foreign exchange earnings to compensate for the decline in oil revenues. []

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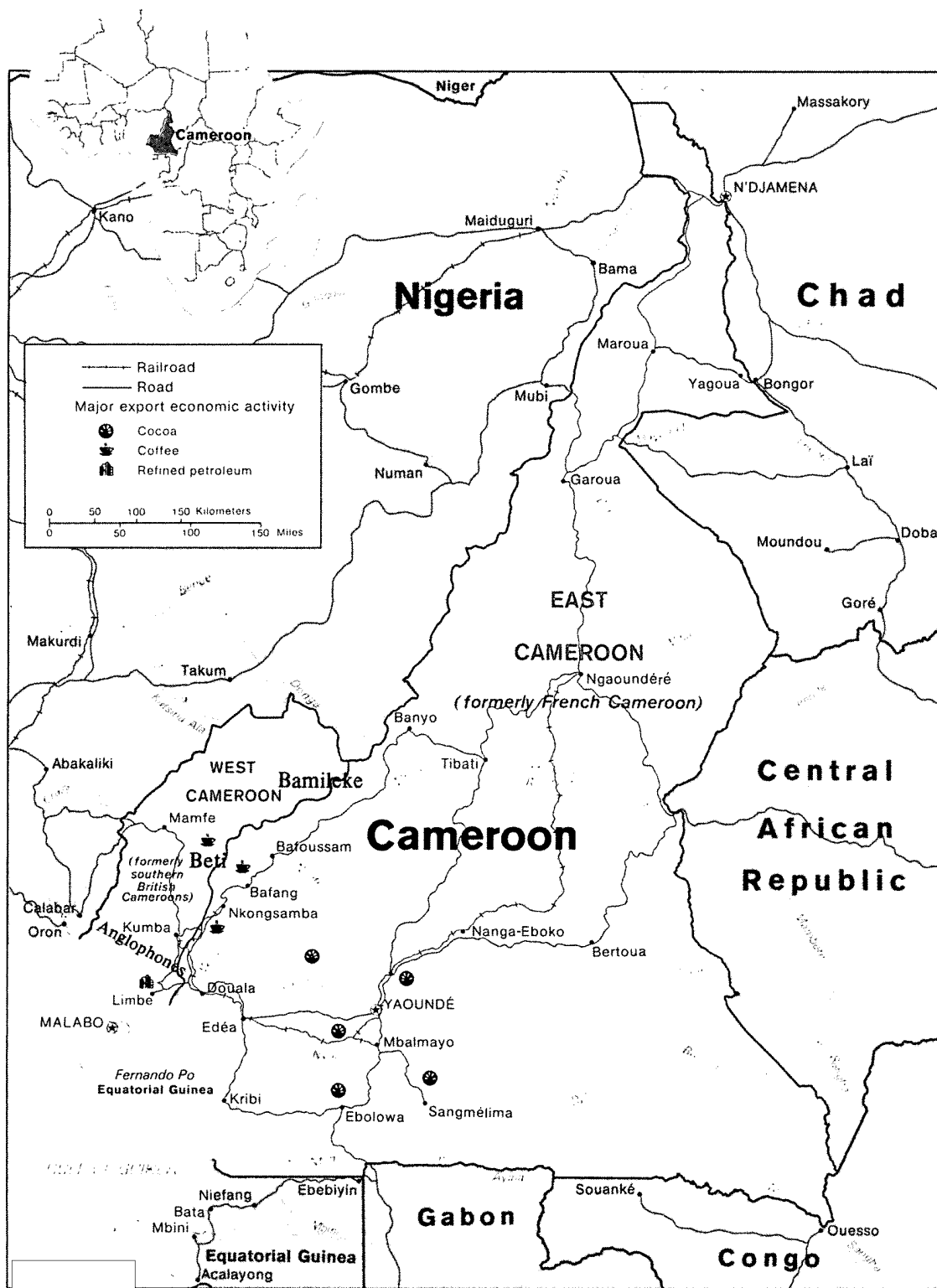
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Government-owned enterprises are losing money and will continue to be a drain on the economy. Moreover, rapid urbanization, underemployment and unemployment, and dim prospects for new jobseekers may eventually cause unrest. The population countrywide is growing at 2.7 percent a year, while the cities are increasing by 8 percent a year. Corruption, an inadequate infrastructure, and an inefficient bureaucracy also hamper economic policies. []

Potential for Libyan Meddling

The US Embassy reports that Biya increasingly regards Libya as a subversive threat. Although Biya hopes to forestall Libyan subversion by maintaining polite ties to Tripoli, the US Embassy reports that Libya may be training a small number of Cameroonian dissidents. Moreover, []

[] Tripoli has been providing arms and ammunition to a previously unknown group—the Cameroon Liberation Movement—[]

Libya may attempt to exploit Cameroon's warming relationship with Israel, which maintains a small interests section in Yaounde. An Israeli mission trains and equips the 700-man Presidential Guard, and provides a small amount of military aid to the Army, according to the US Embassy. In the unlikely event that Biya would decide to establish diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv, Cameroon's moderate Muslims, which make up about 30 percent of the population—possibly with Libyan encouragement—could interpret this as an example of the predominately Christian government's insensitivity to their interests. The US Embassy also believes some of former President Ahidjo's fellow Muslim supporters may be willing to accept Qadhafi's assistance. []

Strains in Relations With France

Although ties to Paris have improved in the past year, US Embassy reporting indicates that suspicions of French intentions linger. The US Embassy reports that mid- and low-level government employees believe Paris supports former President Ahidjo, and government officials suspect French complicity in the Presidential Guard revolt in 1984. Other irritants include Cameroon's trade deficit with Paris, France's diminishing role in Africa, and Paris's warming ties to Nigeria—Cameroon's more powerful neighbor who some Cameroonians fear could pose a military threat. []

Nonetheless, France continues to be Cameroon's most important economic and military ally. It is Cameroon's largest trading partner, taking 35 percent of its exports and providing 48 percent of Cameroon's imports last year. French commercial interests in Cameroon are substantial, and the US Embassy reports some 17,000 French citizens reside in Cameroon. The French presence is pervasive throughout the country's administration, economy, and educational and military structures. According to the Embassy, France provides some \$18 million a year in military aid and 75 military advisers in the country. []

Outlook

Although the US Embassy indicates that Biya's position is secure for the short term, we believe his hold on power over the medium to long term may erode. Because the country remains a collection of disparate tribes with little sense of a "Cameroonian" identity, Biya will have to contend with persistent ethnic and regional pressures. While Cameroon has proved more successful in managing its oil windfall than most other African producers, economic problems may diminish Biya's popular support. The woefully inefficient government-owned companies, generally low producer prices for commodity exports, and high interest rates on external loans, may slow economic growth and prove a serious drain on government resources. At the same time Biya will have to contend with a rapidly growing and urbanized population of well-educated youth pressing for greater employment opportunities. []

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Africa Briefs

Angola

The NAM Ministerial

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Angola probably is well satisfied with its successful staging of the Nonaligned Ministerial meeting in Luanda from 2 to 8 September. The meeting took place without incident, despite UNITA's claims that it would bring the Angolan civil war into the capital and disrupt the gathering. Thanks to Cuba's behind-the-scenes activity, participants sustained a decidedly anti-US tone and strongly supported Angola's stand in the US-sponsored regional negotiations. Cuba successfully championed the selection of Zimbabwe to host the next NAM summit—a move that will allow Havana a venue to push the Movement further in an anti-US direction.

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Moscow was rarely criticized by name, although the Iranian Foreign Minister did specifically attack the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. The US Embassy in Harare believes, and we agree, that, judging from its performance as the African representative in the 1983-84 UN Security Council, Zimbabwe will take a fairly radical stand as host of the eighth NAM summit. The Zimbabwean Foreign Ministry, the Embassy asserts, is not up to coping with the NAM chairmanship, either logistically or substantively.

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Ivory Coast

Pre-Election Tensions Increase

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The Democratic Party of Ivory Coast, the country's sole political party, quickly curbed violence earlier this month directed against some 2 million foreign African residents. Party leaders evidently feared that the unrest could escalate and disrupt party elections scheduled for 9 October. Press reports indicate that some 2,000 Ghanaians were injured and an unknown number killed in rioting provoked by the deaths of two Ivorians in crowd violence following a soccer match between the two countries. The party's Political Bureau, the country's most powerful political organization, publicly condemned the violence and threatened to prosecute any Ivorians involved in civil disturbances. Ghana responded by instituting a repatriation program for some 10,000 Ghanians living in Ivory Coast.

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The potential for additional social unrest is increasing on the eve of national elections scheduled for later this year, in our view. Ivory Coast in the past has had one of Africa's best records for employment opportunities, access to consumer goods, and provision of public services. It has attracted foreign workers, who make up about 20 percent of the country's population of more than 10 million and 50 percent of the population in the capital, Abidjan. The economy, however, declined

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for the third straight year in 1984, and, with unemployment on the rise, the government has increased taxes and reduced food and housing subsidies under an IMF-sponsored adjustment program. []

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Mali**Heightened Libyan Profile** []

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In recent months Libya has increased its activities in predominantly Muslim Mali, where some 11 Libyans work in the People's Bureau, three manage a Libyan Arab Bank, and two run a Libyan Cultural Center, according to the US Embassy. Local press reports indicate that earlier this month a Libyan envoy presented Bamako with a check for \$1 million as Libya's contribution to a food self-sufficiency fund.

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[] Libyan officials have asked that Radio Mali—the main source of news in Mali and parts of some neighboring states—broadcast in Arabic, and they have hinted that Tripoli may beam radio programs in the appropriate languages into northern Mali. The US Embassy reports that Libya also is financing an Islamic Center in Bamako that includes a mosque, school, and medical center; it is scheduled for completion later this year. []

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Bamako maintains outwardly friendly, though cautious, relations with Tripoli. Malian President Traore, who took power in 1968, believes that Colonel Qadhafi has territorial designs on his country. Traore suspects Libya of recruiting disaffected students, exiled dissidents, and nomadic Muslim Tuaregs, who hold no allegiance to the central government, according to the US Embassy. []

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[] Traore, however, is unlikely to take a public stand that could jeopardize continued Libyan assistance. The US Embassy in Bamako estimates that some 9,400 Malians still work in Libya, despite recent expulsions, to escape the hardships of their drought-ridden homeland. []

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Togo**Followup on Bombings** []

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In the wake of six bombings in Lome last month, President Eyadema has increased security in the capital and recruited 300 additional people for Togo's 1,600-man intelligence and Gendarmerie forces, [] According to the US Embassy, the police and Gendarmes now carry loaded weapons, make frequent checks of vehicles and pedestrians, and are stationed at public buildings and hotels. Although several arrests have been made, an investigation of the bombings has yet to produce any conclusive results []

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[] Eyadema believes that Togolese dissidents with Ghanaian assistance were responsible and has threatened to break relations

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with Ghana as a result. The President privately told US Embassy officials that Libyan- and Cuban-trained relatives of former President Olympio, who was killed in a military coup in 1963, are attempting to infiltrate Lome. The Olympios, a wealthy family of southern Ewe tribesmen, have long opposed Eyadema's northern regime, and hold Eyadema responsible for the former president's death. The Ewes—predominant in southern Togo and southeastern Ghana—make up approximately 40 percent of Togo's population and the armed forces. Eyadema has long believed that Ghanaian President Rawlings, an Ewe, lends support to Togolese dissidents.

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